1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' ● [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhanrai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *ponda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

302 and 5 cm. over the ears; this runs right round the head except just below the hair-knot. It is not the natural edge of the hair, as a little is shaved over the centre of the forehead and a good deal over the temples. From a parting (*paya*) just above this the hair is drawn back, like a European's hair brushed straight back from the forehead over the crown, into a top-knot knotted at the back of the head to hang down considerably lower than the Hill Maria crown-tuft knot. The knot is called *kupa-kelk*. The vernacular words used in describing this coiffure are from the Bison-horn dialect used around Aranpur. I have not seen Bison-horn Marias having their hair trimmed; but they say they use razors in the same way as the Hill Marias.

Women's hair is never cut. The hill women all part their hair in front in the centre and bring it back and down over their ears, the whole of which is left visible, into a great pendulous bunch at the back, like bobbed hair, but with the ends not trimmed off but apparently brought over some kind of stuffing and tucked under it.
301 They wear wooden combs made by the young men and often
302 ornamented above the teeth with patterns worked with criss-cross strands of *kosa* silk. These are sometimes as high as Spanish combs, but never as broad. So, too, the man often wears a comb in his crown-tuft. The Bison-horn Maria women do their hair similarly, but frequently wear round the centre of the forehead and the back of the head a horizontal fillet of plain, thin, polished brass about 2 cm. wide, called *utari*, and over this a snood, almost a tiara, of brass, patterned in relief with hammered suns and moons, vertical and oblique hatching lines, saltires, etc., of which the broadest portion fits closely over the skull between the crown and the forehead, the tapering sides descending obliquely over the *utari*, passing behind the ears and ending in cusps which are linked together under the bun. This is called a *talutar*; it, too, is brightly polished. At its greatest width, where it passes over the top of the head, it is 9 or 10 cm. wide. Some women do not wear both *utari* and *talutar*, but either one or the other; the *talutar* can often be seen hung up on the veranda when the woman is busy in the fields; but in the warm spring and hot weather months when you meet bands of women gathering forest fruits, most of them are wearing their *talutar*.

291 Before I visited the Abujhmar hills I was regaled with the tale told to Glasfurd in 1862 that many of the Hill Marias wore leaves, being too poor to buy any cloth. It was even then a fable; Glasfurd states that he made enquiries about this and was told by the Marias invariably that they had never seen or heard of any people so poor that they covered themselves with teak leaves; however poor they

Dress and ornaments: (a) Hill Maria

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE VI

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Full-face, Jugho Chero, of Itulnar

Hill Maria of Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

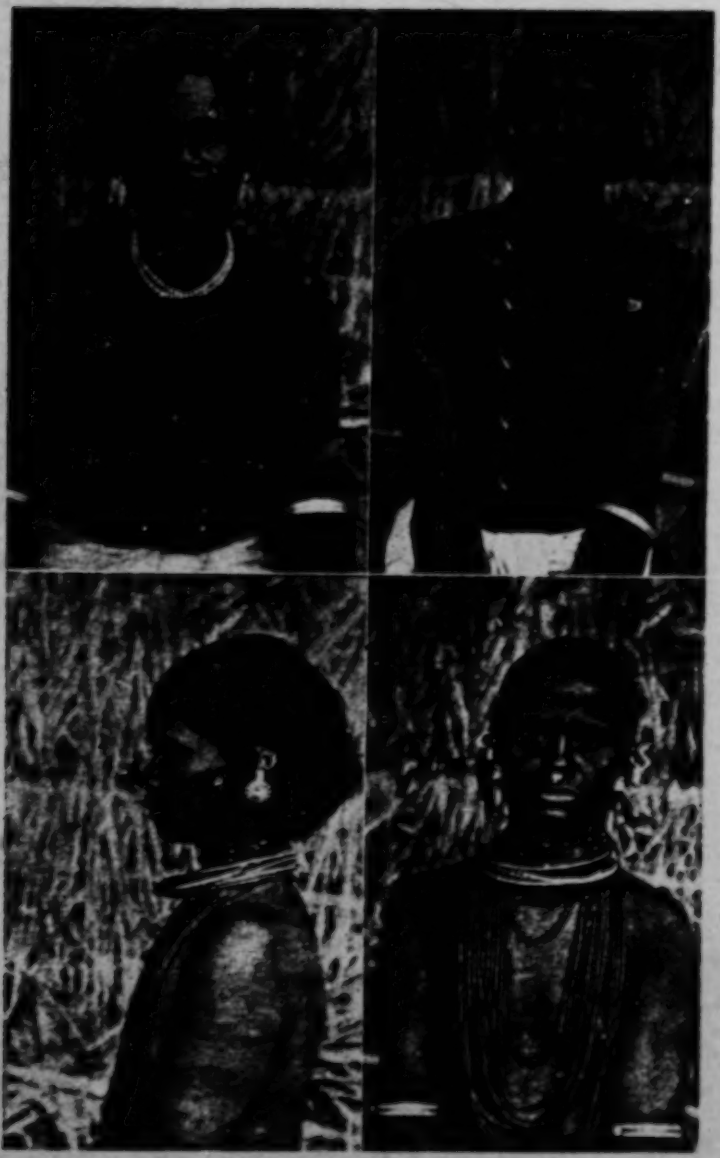
Kutru Mar youths, wearing *taghali* bark overcoats

[Facing p. 70]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII



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BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum

Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[facing p. 240]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
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Appendix V

Anthropometric Analysis of the Hill and Bison-horn Marias

By Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, M.Sc., B.L.,
Joint Editor, *Man in India*

I accompanied Mr. W. V. Grigson in his March 1934 tour in the Hill and Bison-horn Maria country of the Bastar State, and was able to measure 100 Hill Maria and 50 Bison-horn Maria males; a severe attack of fever unfortunately prevented me from measuring as many Bison-horn as Hill Marias. I measured the Hill Marias in the Abujhmar hills camps at Orcha, Adeq, Itulnar, Hikul and Handawada from these and adjacent Hill villages in the *parganas* of Chhota Dongar Mar, Kutru Mar, Bhairamgarh Mar, and Barsur (Dantewara) Mar. The Bison-horn Marias were nearly all measured in the camp at Aranpur in Dantewara tahsil, near the head of the pass leading down from the Dantewara plateau to the Dorla country of the Konta tahsil; the men were mostly from Aranpur and Chameli *parganas*. I append tables summarising the results of my measurements; space has forbidden the reproduction here of the long tables of individual measurements, which I hope subsequently to publish elsewhere. I have followed R. Martin's anthropometric technique.

General description

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are generally of medium stature, though tall and short individuals are not uncommon. The mean heights of those measured were 162·7 cm. Hill, and 161·7 cm. Bison-horn Maria. They are very well built, with well-proportioned body and limbs. Their skin colour varies from pale wheat to light black (the actual figures were: out of 100 Hill Marias, 9 light brown, 60 brown, 16 dark brown and 15 light black; out of 50 Bison-horn Marias, 3 pale wheat, 5 light brown, 26 brown, 9 dark brown and 7 light black). They have a thick growth of hair on the head, but often cut it short or even shave it in front and round the peripheral region of the head, leaving a long crown-tuft. They have very little facial and body hair, and even those who can grow sparse beards and moustaches often have them clean shaved. The hair is black or dark brown, and is wavy or curly.

Their foreheads are retreating, but straight foreheads are not rare; of 100 Hill Maria foreheads 16 were straight, 57 slightly

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhapal

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Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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[End Plate ZB]

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Plate III

ABOVE: Motiari of Sirpuri, showing method of arranging combs

BELOW: The Gujara, Solk and Mularo of the Barka ghotul

[p.12 (1)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

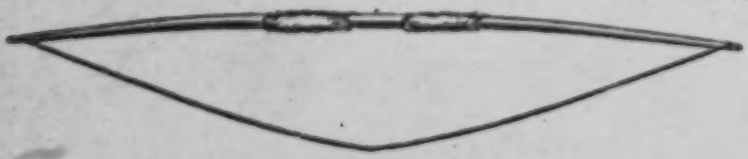
oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and 252 [302]
for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking.

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *gêrawat*,[1] and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *gêratata*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the motiari. In Masora I once saw two motiari extracting oil from the seeds of the keuti tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the chelik had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. HUNTING

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria for eating monkeys and in Koilibera they still talk about the time when W. V. Grigson camped along the northern road near the Abujhmar and the Maria of the Barsur Pargana, who came to see him, left not a single monkey 262



[411]

FIG. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 5′ 4″

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of red ants. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.[2] Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

[1] This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Koiku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses,' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1938), p. 43.

[2] Bison-horn Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Pedo's great-grandfather did this. The Weddal and Gaita of Dualkachu (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate XXIII

Bride at Amaara with braided hair

[p.94(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *massi*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Massi-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

[376] Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis kiyāna*; [515] it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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then rubs down more gently, soothes and quietens the whole body. If oil-seed is used, she rubs this off gradually and cleans the back by ever more gentle movements of the hands. Sometimes, as at Chandabera, the girl catches a boy's shoulder with one hand and rubs and pushes his back very vigorously with the other. In eastern Kondagaon the girls often stand beside the boy and rub the back downwards.

Then the girl takes the boy's left arm and places it over her shoulder, squatting back on her heels and pulling him towards her. The comb is again brought into play, and the skin is soothed by gentle stroking with the hand, before she begins a very vigorous massage of the arm, gripping it with both hands and pulling downwards, then moving the hands in opposite directions with a twisting motion. When a girl is wearing a large number of rings this can be painful. It is impossible to say that the movement of the massage is away from the heart or towards it; it moves in both directions. There is obviously no rule.

When the left arm is finished, the girl removes it from her shoulder, lays the hand in her lap and cracks the fingers one by one. Then she repeats the process for the right arm. In Koilibera the girl did not put the boy's arm on her shoulder but on the ground, and rubbed it up and down.

In some ghotul there now follows a very intimate form of massage. In Binjhli the girl kneels upright or stands behind the boy and bends over him putting her arms round his neck and massages the chest with downward thrusts of the hands, while the boy leans back against her body in great enjoyment. This generally excites ribald comment and cries of 'Catch hold of her breasts!' or 'How big are her breasts?' In Almer, the girl puts her hands under the boy's arms and rubs his chest and stomach. In Phulpar and Koilibera I saw a girl crack a boy's fingers by putting her arms round his neck from behind to catch his hands.

A few other variations may be noted. It is not uncommon for two girls to massage a boy together. One does the back while another massages the arms. In Binjhli and a few other ghotul the girls do not put the arms over their shoulders but in their laps; here too they begin with the arms and afterwards do the back and chest.

In many places it is taboo for the motiari to massage the boys' legs, and where Hill Maria influence is strong even after marriage a wife does not massage her husband's legs unless he is ill. But in the central area, in Gorma, Berma, Jogi Alwar, and doubtless elsewhere, and in Chargaon and Korkoti to the north, the girls massage the boys' legs every now and then, at Jogi Alwar every three days, at Berma every fifteen. The girl sits in front of the boy and rubs right up the leg almost to the groin.

When a girl has finished her massage, she often lays her hand on the boy's head or shoulder and says Johar.

In the majority of ghotul this is the daily programme, but sometimes the combing and massage is done less frequently. In Binjhli, it was once a week—on Fridays; in Pupgaon, the girls cracked the boys' fingers every day, combed their hair every three days and massaged once a week.

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It is now fairly late and boys and girls prepare for bed. In fine weather they may scatter about the compound and in the various huts; when it is cold or wet they seem to prefer crowding into the main ghotul building. The little boys and girls lie down in a long row, two boys, then a girl, a boy, two girls and so on. Boys without partners—and there are often fewer girls than boys—lie down two and two on their little mats. Those who have permanent or temporary partners lie down with them, side by side facing each other in

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive:
291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria.
832 You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render
302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become
515 intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just
524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice. 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar kato*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round

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FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area
(See p. 383)

[291]

the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyâri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows.

[524]

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 90) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Belle marrâte pungîr pay ênta

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The lovers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 271.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 306ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 47

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

X 883
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ABOVE: The Baiga combs the hair of the senior Kotwar at Nayanar

BELOW: The Alosa massages the junior Kotwar at Nayanar

[p. 396 (A)]

Plate LXXXVI

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Chelik with face decorations

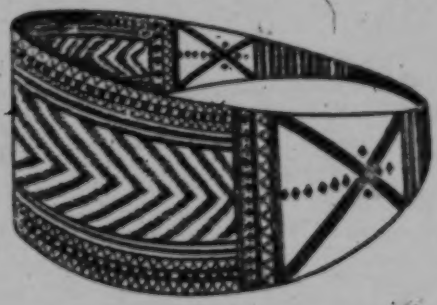
The Likhan of the Timnar ghotul

[p. 420 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with ornaments; when visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

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Hinga: a Maria girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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H5
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Girls fetching water at Bastanar

[FACING p.32]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Maria girl of Mokhpal. Domestic life is usually happy: the rare infidelities quickly lead to revenge

[facing p. 33]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Dulha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

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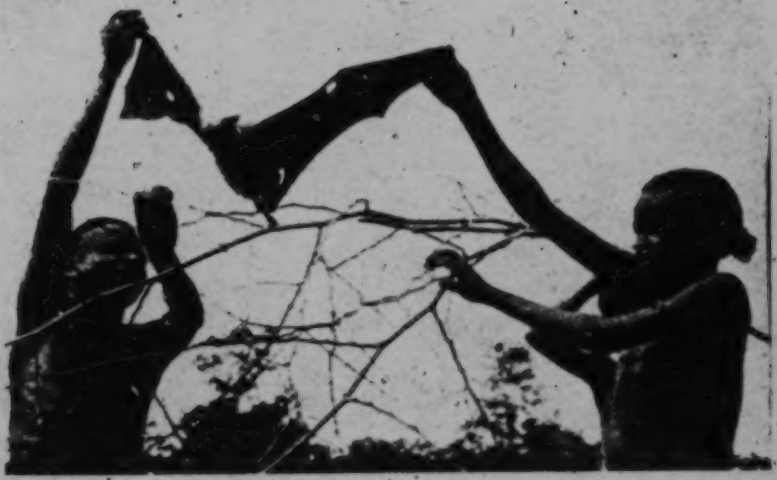

[facing p.49]